

Vessels Advertised as Loading

degrees which the Association has made in a great measure to the realization of which the members of the Association have listened to and been guided by the President. The use of power is born at the same moment as the consciousness of possessing power; and when men unite for the protection and furtherance of their interests, as *employees* they are very much inclined as a rule to over-estimate, and sometimes to misuse, the strength which union undoubtedly gives them. It is not necessary to point to examples of this; many will apply themselves at once, and some of the most convincing of these are of quite recent date. The members of the Merchants' Marine Officers' Association have not shown my disposition to rush into the dangerous experiment of trying their strength against the power of the State, but following force to unity, they have taken counsel. Captain Ashton has all along insisted that the interests of employers and employed are practically identical, and has deprecated any feeling of antagonism in dealing with questions that may arise between them, insisting that these questions should be discussed in a spirit of fairness and reasonableness. This is a great improvement of the

usual methods of fraternalism, and it must be admitted that so far the members of the Association have closely followed the advice of the President. In the Report just issued, however, we observe something which seems to indicate a lapse from the principles by which the Society has hitherto been guided. We refer to certain statements which appear in a communication on the "Three Officers Question," prepared by the Committee for the purpose of being

submitted to the local insurance and shipping offices. This communication sets forth, in the first place, that:—

"There is a very general feeling amongst members of the Merchant Service that the system of watch-and-watch maintained on board what are known as "deep sea" steamers and coasters entails unnecessary hardship on officers and endangers the safety of the vessels.

cargo and passengers committed to their care during the night watches. Now this is a subject which the members of the Association are perfectly entitled to bring before the notice of shipowners and insurance offices, and in regard to which they are equally well entitled to ask for reform. But when the Committee proceed to publish erroneous and misleading statements in support of their view of the matter, they take a dishonourable course.

view of the matter, they take the position which makes fair and reasonable discussion impossible and which is likely to bring discredit upon the Association. The Committee must know quite well that it is not a fair statement of the case to say that the officer of the watch is expected to be wide awake and have all his wits about him for four hours on the bridge when he has, in many cases, been at work superintending the stowage of cargo, and even tallying cargo, for 12, 14 and even 24 hours at a stretch. The

rule on coasting steamers here is that tallying and superintending the stowage of cargo is entirely in the hands of the Chinese compradore, a rule which relieves captains and officers of a great deal of responsibility and hard work and

Whether the appointment of a third officer and the abolition of the compadre system would be any advantage to the officers is a matter for them to judge.

we have reason to believe that the change would be one the initiation of which would not entail any additional expense so far as the shipowners are concerned, although in the long-run it would not prove to be satisfactory.

tory. But apart altogether from the merits of the 'Three Officers Question,' we should be very sorry if the British Mercantile Marine Officers' Association, in discussing this or any other subject, endangered the reputation Sir

fairplay and reasonableness which it has justly earned.

THE POLITICAL CRISIS IN JAPAN.
FORMATION OF A NEW MINISTRY

We have been favoured by the Japanese Consul with the following communication:—

Japanese Consulate, Hongkong.

To the Editor of the 'CHINA MAIL.'

Sir,—I have received last night the following telegram from Japan :—
A New Ministry has been formed under the Premiership of Count Ito and the following appointments have been made :—

Count Ho, Minister of Resident Affairs.
Mr. Matsui, Minister for Foreign Affairs.
Count Igouye, Minister of the Interior.
Mr. Watanabe Kimitake, Minister of
Finance.
General Count Orama, Minister of War.
Admiral Viscount Naga, Minister of Navy.

Marine.
General Count Yamagata, Minister of
Justice.
Mr Kono, Minister of Education.
Count Goto, Minister of Agriculture and
Commerce.
General Count Kuroda, Minister of Home

Yours faithfully,
MIYARAWA KYUJIRO.

